

On the tracks of the First World War in Trentino

TRENTINO



This booklet was realized by Rete Trentino Grande Guerra
and Rete degli Ecomusei del Trentino

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Provincia autonoma
di Trento



RETE
**TRENTINO
GRANDE GUERRA**



Rete degli Ecomusei
del Trentino



Museo Storico Italiano
della Guerra



www.trentinograndeguerra.it

www.ecomusei.trentino.it



Hello!

Have you ever heard of the First World War?

By reading this booklet, you'll discover what it was and that, one hundred years ago, it was fought even here in Trentino.

Have you ever seen a fort or a trench? Get ready for an amazing walk!

In the mountains of Trentino you can go in search of forts, trenches, tunnels, military posts and look for evidence of the soldiers who lived here and fought a century ago!

The Ecomuseums will help you to organize the trip by giving you all the information you need.

The museums have been created to commemorate this dramatic event.

In Trentino there are as many as 19: perhaps you're already visiting one.

Otherwise, look at the map on page 20 and choose where to start.

You can see uniforms, photographs, weapons and equipment used by soldiers during the war.

Look carefully: you will find many of the objects in the displays also among the pages of this book!

Enjoy your adventure!

The First World War

The First World War broke out in 1914 and ended in 1918. It was an event which caused extraordinary and dramatic changes.

It was a “world war” because it involved, for the first time, many states. These were not only in Europe: France, Great Britain, Russia, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey, Italy, USA and Japan were involved.

It was completely different from any other war fought up until then. A large number of weapons were produced, large fortifications were built, a vast amount of soldiers fought, the lives of millions of women and children suffered great transformations, and great technological innovations were made. The war had major consequences on society, economy, politics and culture. That's why it has also been known as the “Great War”.

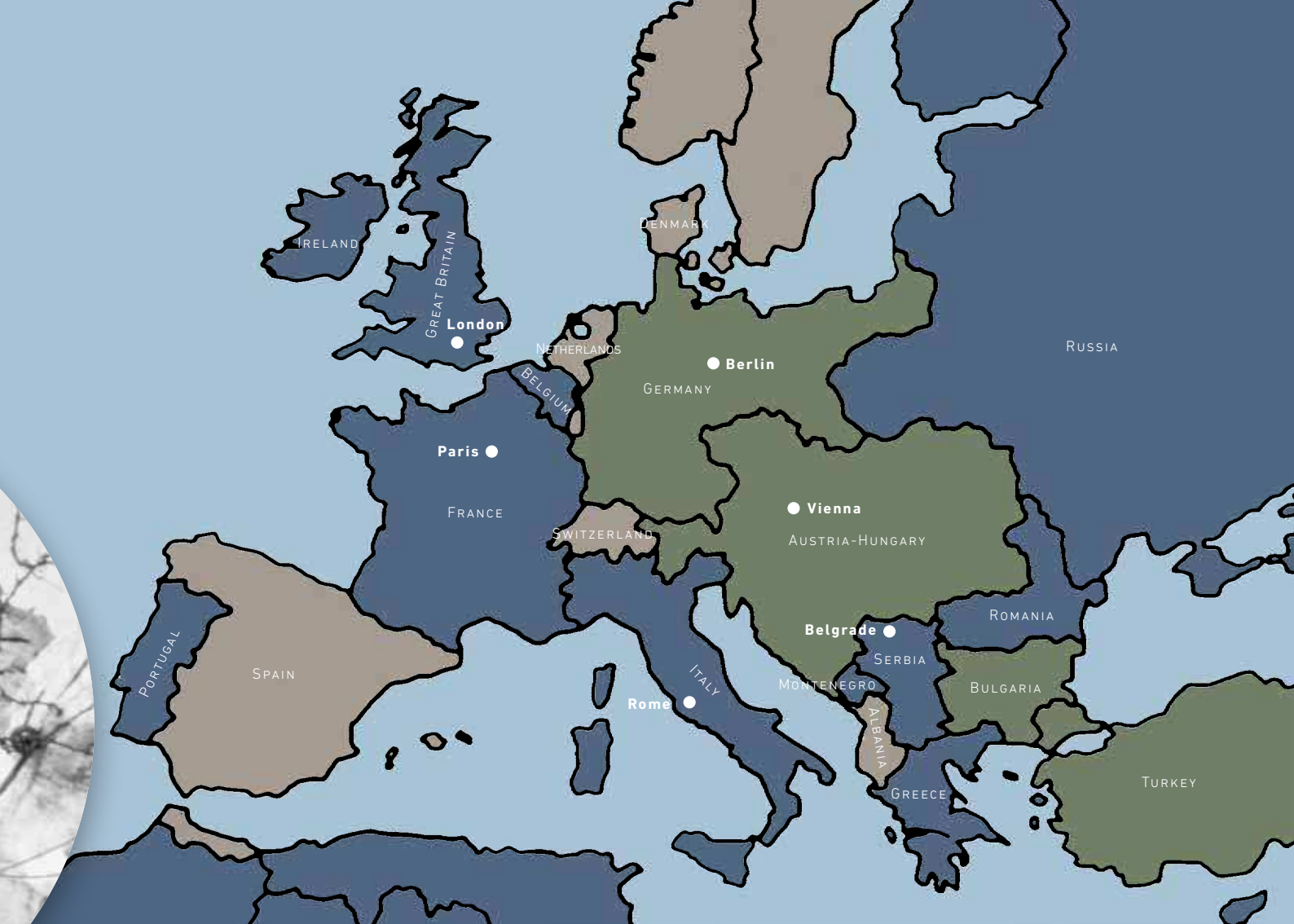
At the time Trentino was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and bordered the Kingdom of Italy.

At the outbreak of war, Trentino soldiers left for the Russian front in the Imperial uniform. In 1915, when Italy declared war on Austria-Hungary and these valleys became battlefields, hundreds of kilometres of trenches were built, settlements were bombed and civilians fled.

After the war Trentino became part of Italy, the winner of the conflict.

The trench is one of the symbol of First World War. This was an Italian trench on Monte Zugna.





The trenches were dug into the earth or rock; had loopholes from which to shoot and were sometimes protected by concrete walls or steel shielding. These are found on Mount Celva, close to Trento.



The trenches



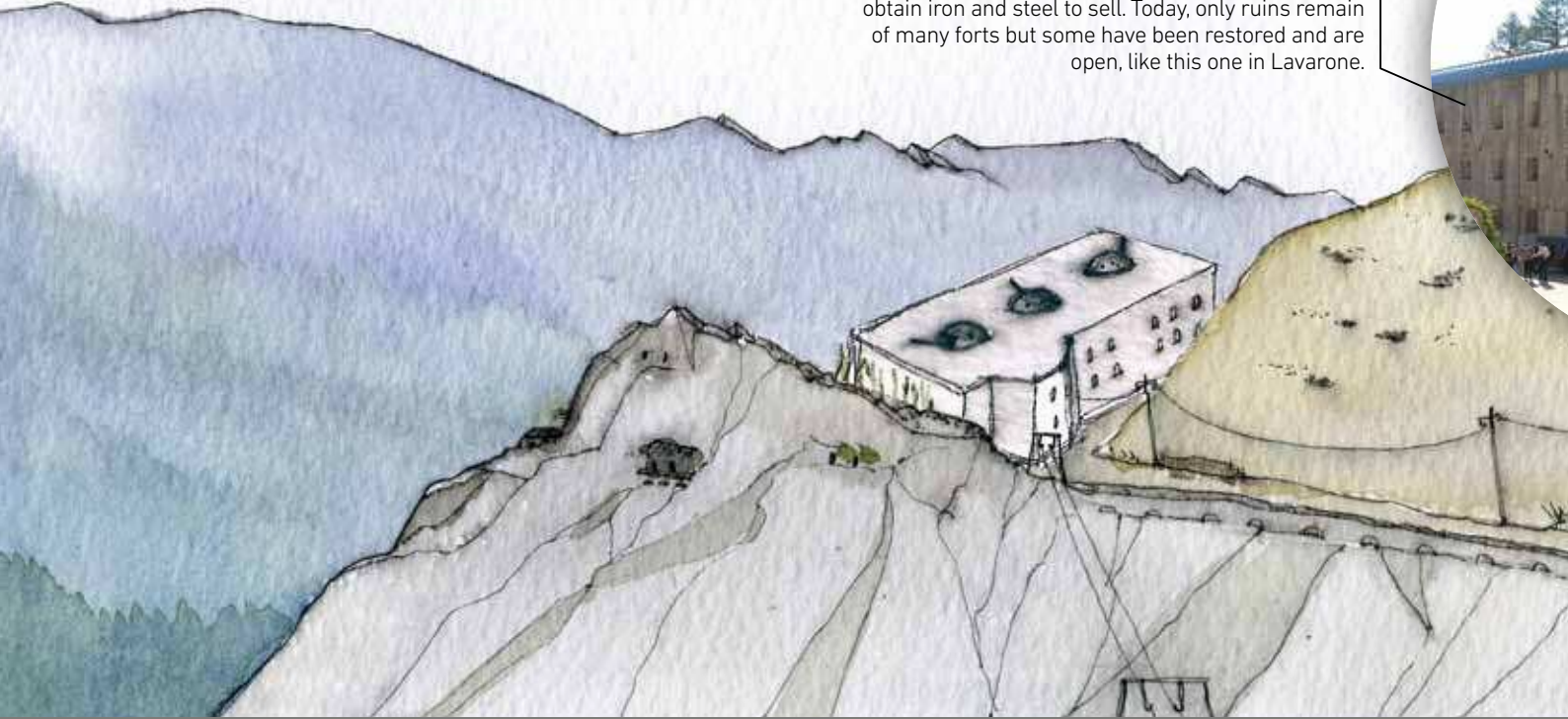
In the trenches metal helmets were used to protect the head from shrapnel. The armies adopted camouflage uniforms coloured to blend into the earth. This is an Italian helmet.



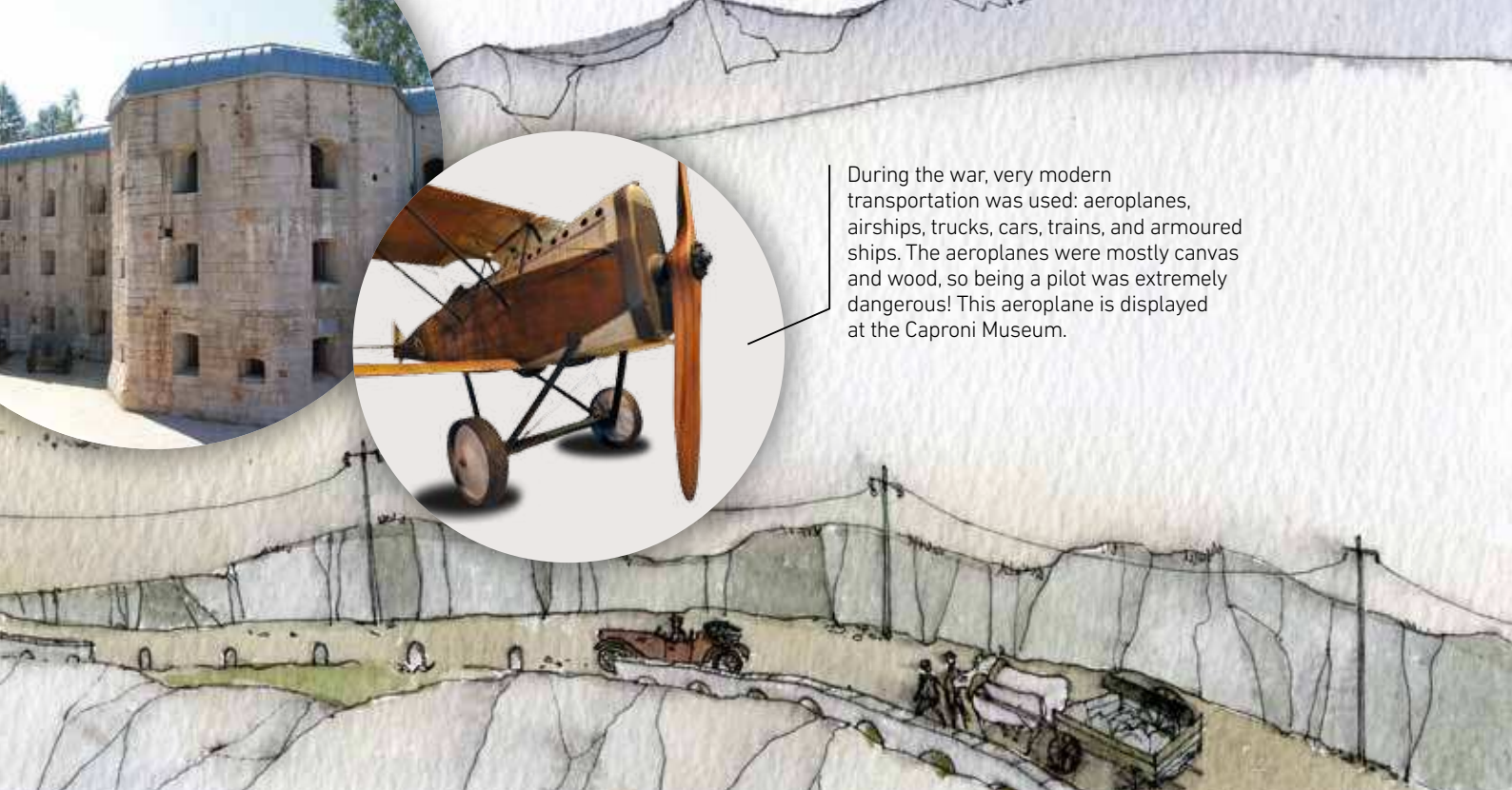
During the war trenches were used: long excavations where soldiers fought and lived, even for weeks. Each army built numerous trenches; in front of the “first line” dense networks of barbed wire were installed. The front covered a very wide area: it included the trenches and the rear where the kitchens, huts, warehouses, hospitals and command posts were located. Life was tough in the trenches: it was constantly exposed to enemy fire; soldiers suffered from the heat in summer and cold in the winter; you could not wash or change; soldiers often lived in the mud together with rats, lice and other insects.



After the war, "recoverers" demolished the forts to obtain iron and steel to sell. Today, only ruins remain of many forts but some have been restored and are open, like this one in Lavarone.



The forts



During the war, very modern transportation was used: aeroplanes, airships, trucks, cars, trains, and armoured ships. The aeroplanes were mostly canvas and wood, so being a pilot was extremely dangerous! This aeroplane is displayed at the Caproni Museum.

In Trentino, before the war, the Austro-Hungarian Empire built dozens of fortifications to defend against a possible Italian attack. It took many workers and a lot of time and money. Each fort had to be self-sufficient: they had food and ammunition storage, an aqueduct, a power generator and could communicate to other fortifications through telephonic and optical links. In more modern forts, the cannons were protected by steel domes. Life in the forts was hard and the greatest fear was of becoming trapped. At the outbreak of the war, many of these buildings were discovered to be vulnerable to enemy artillery.



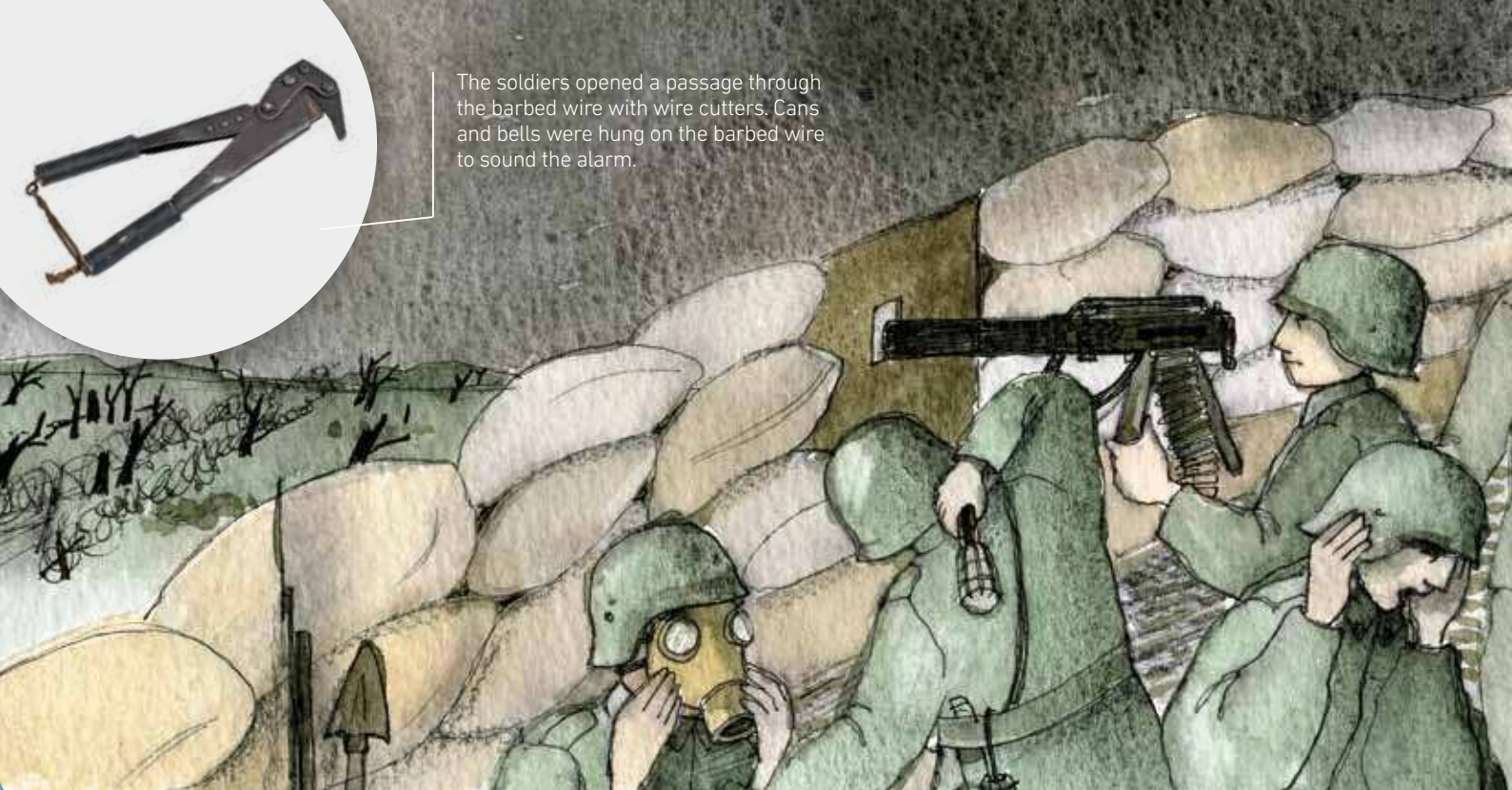
The assault

The bombing left behind burnt woods, destroyed buildings, and a crater-strewn ground. After many years, in some areas - such as nearby Fort Serrada on the High Plain of Folgaria - you can still see the "wounds" inflicted by the war on the landscape.

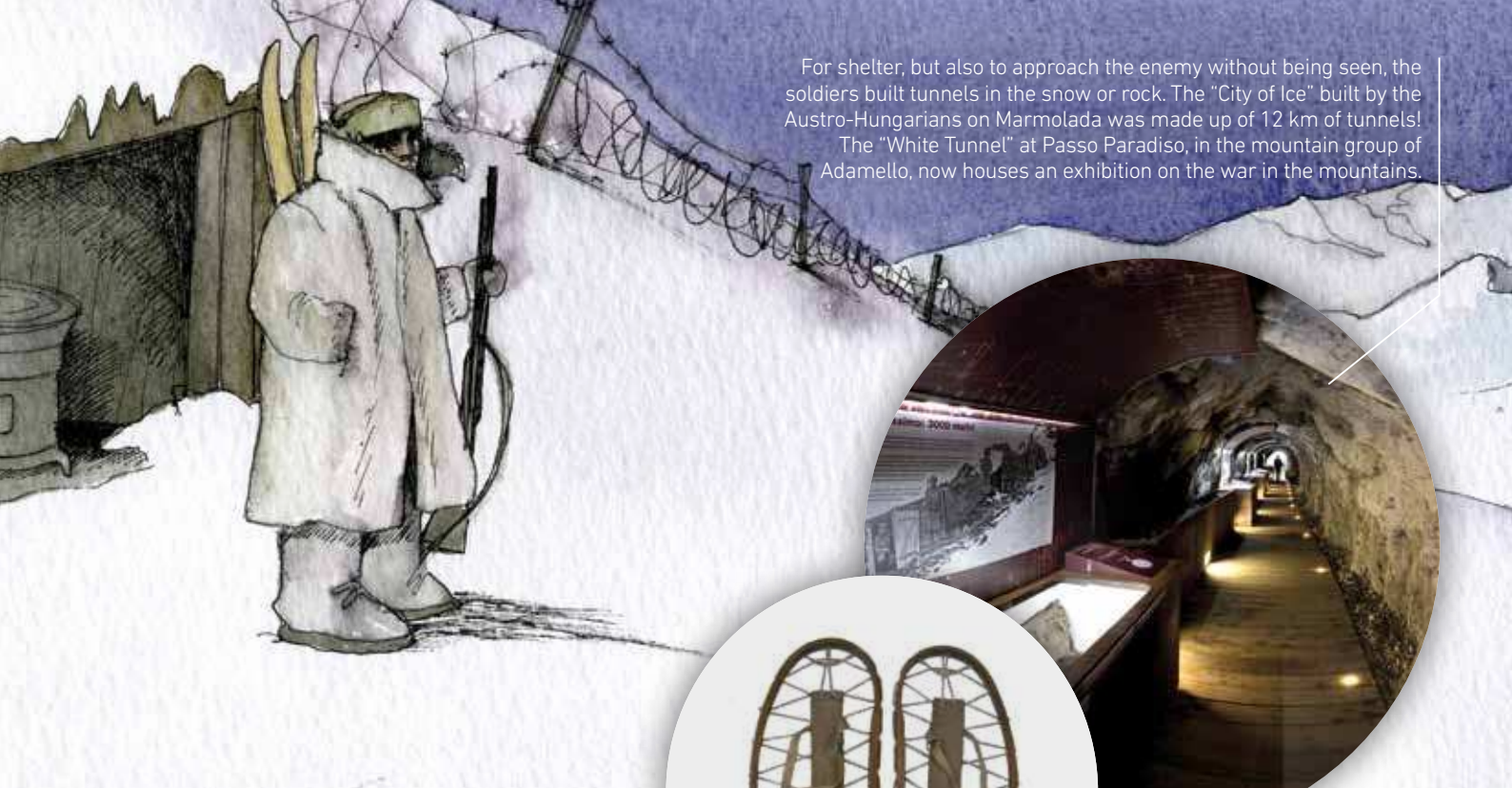




The soldiers opened a passage through the barbed wire with wire cutters. Cans and bells were hung on the barbed wire to sound the alarm.



When the order arrived, the soldiers had to quickly leave their trenches for the assault. They crossed the “no man’s land” - the space between their trenches and the enemy - to attack and conquer the enemy positions. Soldiers were equipped with helmets and gas masks, bayonet-fitted rifles, wire cutters, shovels and hand grenades. The moment of attack was the most dangerous: men were exposed to the shots of rifles, machine guns and in particular artillery, which fired incessantly from the rear. In this war numerous casualties were recorded, more than ever before.



For shelter, but also to approach the enemy without being seen, the soldiers built tunnels in the snow or rock. The "City of Ice" built by the Austro-Hungarians on Marmolada was made up of 12 km of tunnels! The "White Tunnel" at Passo Paradiso, in the mountain group of Adamello, now houses an exhibition on the war in the mountains.

War in the mountains

On snow the soldiers used wooden skis or snowshoes, wore a white uniform and special goggles. Food and weapons were pulled on sleds.



For the first time soldiers fought in the highest mountain peaks of Trentino: between the glaciers and snow of Ortles, Cevedale, Adamello and Marmolada. For them, the major enemies in this “white war” were the cold, snow and avalanches.

Huts, cable cars, roads and trails were made, and tunnels were carved into the rock or ice. Soldiers and prisoners used these for transportation, but also women and children, as well as mules and dogs. Both armies deployed soldiers trained to live and fight in such a hostile environment: the *Alpini* and *Landesschützen*.

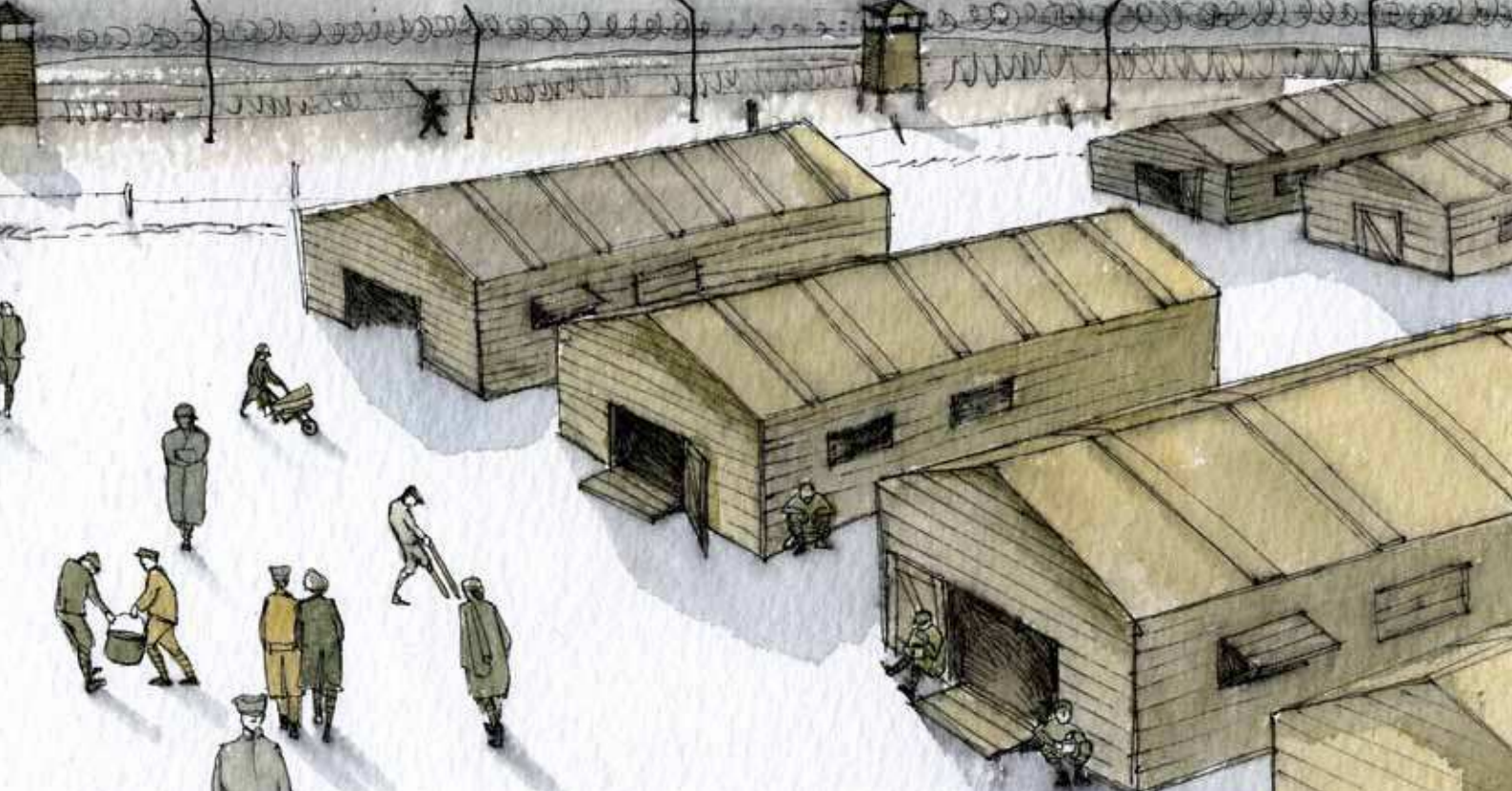


The Russian prisoners set to work on Carè Alto left a trace of their passage: a wooden church. In Pejo Valley and in Vallagarina there are still trails known as the "paths of the Serbs".



To earn food, many prisoners built small items to sell to civilians. This cage, in the Museum of Pejo, was given to a girl by a Russian soldier in exchange for a piece of bread.

Prisoners



In war, almost 10 million soldiers were killed (out of 65 million enlisted), whose bodies were buried in the cemeteries behind the front. More than 11,500 were Trentino soldiers. Millions of the sick and wounded were treated in military hospitals. Nearly 8 million were captured and became prisoners. According to international agreements they could not be killed or mistreated. They were concentrated in camps made up of fenced off huts and monitored by guards, in which they had to endure cold, hunger and disease. Many were put to work. In Trentino, Russian and Serbian prisoners were sent to build roads and military huts.



During the war millions of letters and postcards were written. Many men and women kept a diary in which the memory of their experiences, or their vented sorrow and fear, is preserved.

After the war, in Trentino more than 20,000 houses were destroyed and soldiers of different nationalities were buried in nearly 1,000 cemeteries. Many no longer exist but some are still visible, such as this one in Malga Sorgazza, in the mountain group of Lagorai.

Destroyed settlements and refugees



The front passed through cities and villages, so many women, children and elderly people became refugees, fleeing their homes to seek a safe place. Their departure was sudden, and they took only a few essential items. Refugees from Trentino numbered more than 100,000. Some were hosted by acquaintances, many had to travel to distant lands and were gathered in groups of large huts called “wooden towns”. After the war, the refugees found their villages destroyed, fields and forests burned. The war had taken away everything. It took years before life returned to normal.

What remains of a war

Every war leaves many signs: destroyed homes and devastated fields and woods. In addition to the ruins, the pain over lost ones and the suffering endured by the population remains.

At the end of the First World War houses were rebuilt and work started again, but the effects of that conflict continued to weigh even after many years.

Some people, called "recoverers", retraced the areas where the war was fought, and with great difficulty and danger, gathered what was left in the territory: the sale of these materials allowed many families to survive in those difficult years.

Many of these objects, however, have survived and now we find them on display in museums. In the villages and towns of Trentino today there are no longer ruins and destruction, but you need only to go into the mountains to find many traces of that war: the remains of huts, trenches and communication trenches, as well as forts and military posts.

Now that you know their story, look for them and prepare to discover much more.

Trenches on Mount
Altissimo di Nago.



Ecomuseums Trentino

The purpose of ecomuseums is to study, preserve and develop the collective memory of a community and the territory which hosts it. Their job is to protect and promote what the area offers: its natural environment, its historical and cultural heritage, and its traditional activities.

In Trentino, these institutions also look after the remnants of the First World War.

In each territory they manage the forts (Barbadifior, Larino, Corno, Civezzano), trenches (in the mountain group of Cevedale and Adamello, on Cadria and Nozzolo, on Calisio and the Lagorai chain), military cemeteries (San Rocco, Bondo, Clef, Malga Sorgazza, Caoria) and museums (Pejo, Bersone, Borgo Valsugana, Caoria).

Visit the Ecomuseums: they will help you to discover their treasures.

A

Ecomuseo della Val di Pejo - Piccolo mondo alpino

Casa dell'Ecomuseo
Celentino di Pejo, via dei Capitèi 24
339 6179380
www.linumpeio.it

B

Ecomuseo Valle del Chiese - Porta del Trentino

c/o Consorzio dei Comuni
BIM del Chiese
Condino, via Baratieri 11
0465 622137
www.ecomuseovalledelchiese.it

C

Ecomuseo della Judicaria - Dalle Dolomiti al Garda

c/o Comune di Comano Terme
Ponte Arche, via G. Prati 1
0465 701434 / 339 1953079
www.dolomiti-garda.it

D

Ecomuseo dell'Argentario

c/o Biblioteca comunale
Civezzano, via C. Battisti 1
0461 858400
www.ecoarge.net

E

Ecomuseo del Lagorai - Nell'antica giurisdizione di Castellalto

c/o Municipio
Telve Valsugana, piazza Vecchia 18
348 6769967
www.ecomuseolagorai.eu

F

Ecomuseo della Valsugana - Dalle sorgenti di Rava al Brenta

c/o Biblioteca comunale
Strigno, Piazzetta Carbonari
0461 762620
www.ecovalsugana.net

G

Ecomuseo del Tesino - Terra di Viaggiatori

c/o Biblioteca comunale
Pieve Tesino, via G. Buffa 1
0461 594162
www.ecomuseo.tesino.it

H

Ecomuseo del Vanoi -

Casa dell'Ecomuseo
Canal San Bovo, piazza Vittorio Emanuele 9
0439 719106
www.ecomuseo.vanoi.it

Museums of the First World War in Trentino

The museums were created to remember this war, which has deeply marked the history of Trentino, and collect and preserve the materials remaining in the territory.

Today these 19 museums are part of the *Rete Trentino Grande Guerra*, which promotes collaboration between the entities involved in the field.

1

Pejo 1914–1918. La guerra sulla porta

Pejo Paese, salita San Rocco 1

348 7400942

www.museopejo.it

2

Museo della Guerra di Vermiglio

Vermiglio, via di Borgo Nuovo 15

0463 758200 - Uff. Turistico Vermiglio

www.vermigliovacanze.it

www.museoguerrabianca.com

www.sulletracedellagrandeguerra.it

3

Forte Strino

Vermiglio, via Nazionale (SS. n. 42)

0463 758200 - Uff. Turistico Vermiglio

www.vermigliovacanze.it

www.sulletracedellagrandeguerra.it

4

Museo della Guerra Bianca Adamellina "Recuperanti in Val Rendena"

Spiazzo Rendena, via San Vigilio 2

0465 801544 - Pro Loco

www.museograndeguerra.com

5

Museo della Grande Guerra in Valle del Chiese

Bersone, via Chiesa 11

320 0767807

www.visitchiese.it

6

Museo Garibaldino

Bezzecca, via Lungassat Salvator Greco 14

0464 508182 - Museo delle Palafitte

www.palafitteledro.it

www.museostorico.it

7

MAG Museo Alto Garda

Riva del Garda, piazza Battisti 3/A

0464 573869

www.museoaltogarda.it

8

Museo Storico Italiano della Guerra

Rovereto, via Castelbarco 7

0464 438100

www.museodellaguerra.it

9

Museo Forte Belvedere-Gschwent

Lavarone, via Tiroler Kaiserjäger 1

0464 780005

www.fortebelvedere.org

10

Centro Documentazione Luserna

Luserna, via Trento 6
0464 789638
www.lusern.it

11

**Mostra permanente della Grande Guerra
in Valsugana e sul Lagorai**

Borgo Valsugana, Ex Mulino Spagolla
vicolo Sottochiesa 11
0461 757195
0461 754052 - Biblioteca Comunale
di Borgo Valsugana
www.mostradiborgo.it

12

**Mostra permanente della Grande Guerra
sul Lagorai**

Caoria, via Ghiaie
328 8311575 / 348 5736704
Gruppo Alpini di Caoria
www.alpinicaoria.it

13

Collezione di cimeli del Rifugio Cauriol

Val Sàdole, Ziano di Fiemme
348 5161123 - Gestore del rifugio
0462 570016 - A.P.T. Valle di Fiemme
www.visitfiemme.it

14

"Sul fronte dei ricordi"

Moena-Someda, "Stala de la Nenola"
334 8222082
www.frontedeiricordi.it

15

Museo della Grande Guerra 1914-18

Passo Fedaia - Canazei
0462 601181
347 7972356

16

Museo Nazionale Storico degli Alpini

Trento, Doss Trento
0461 827248
www.museonazionalealpini.it

17

Fondazione Museo storico del Trentino

Spazio espositivo "Le Gallerie"
Trento, Piedicastello
0461 230482
www.museostorico.it

18

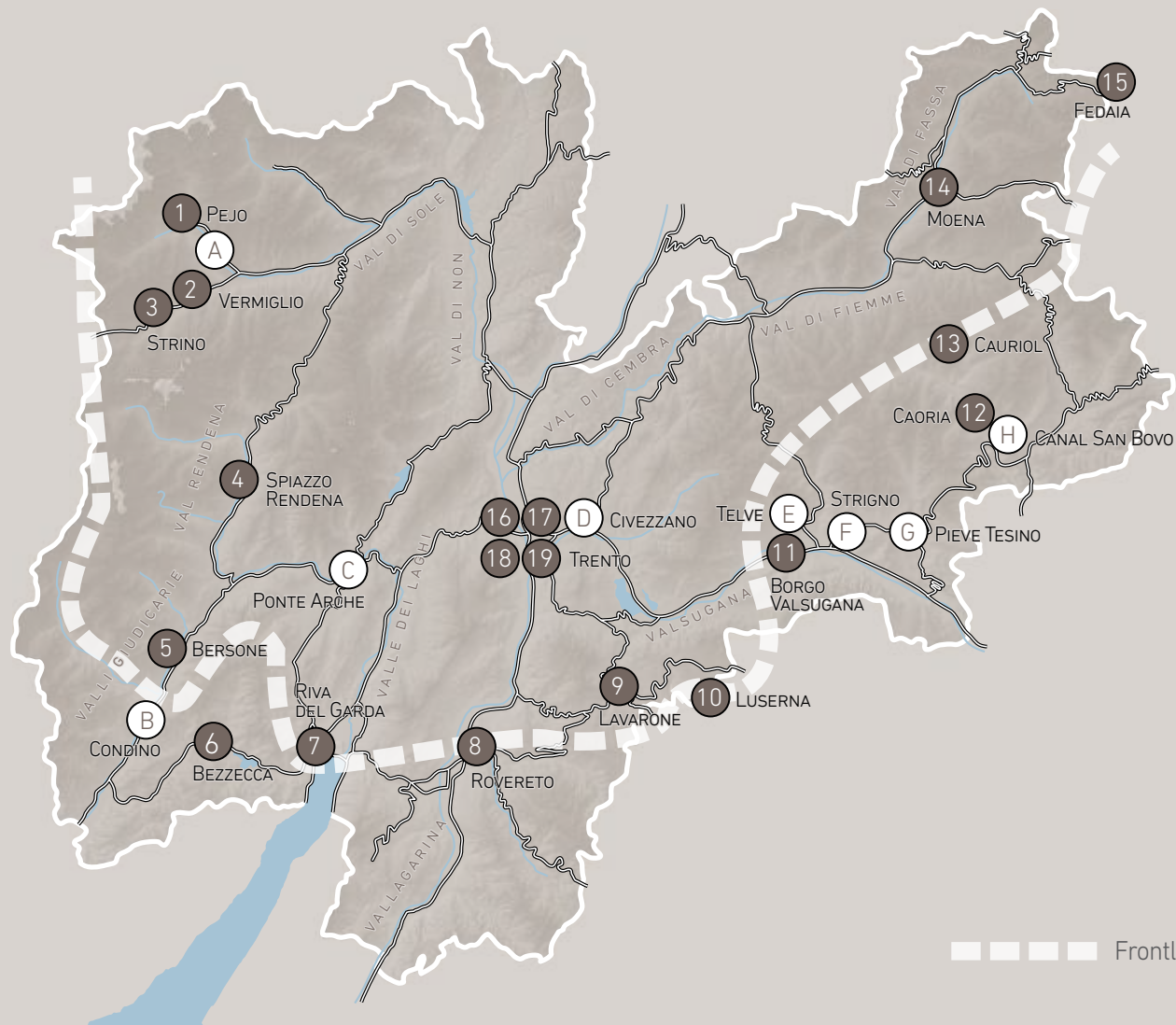
Museo dell'Aeronautica Gianni Caproni

Trento, via Lidorno 3
0461 944888
www.museocaproni.it

19

Museo della Società Alpinisti Tridentini

Trento, via Mancì 57
0461 980211
www.sat.tn.it



Frontline

Photographs

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Italian trench on Monte Zugna

Museo Storico Italiano della Guerra

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Austro-Hungarian trenches on Mount Celva, Trento

Museo Storico Italiano della Guerra

Italian helmet mod. Adrian

Museo Storico Italiano della Guerra

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Fort Belvedere-Gschwent in Lavarone

Museo Forte Belvedere-Gschwent

Aeroplane S.V.A. 5 used for the flight over Vienna, 9 august 1918

Museo dell'Aeronautica Gianni Caproni

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Fort Serrada

Centro di Catalogazione Architettonica -
Soprintendenza per i Beni Architettonici
e Archeologici - Foto Studio Rensi

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Austro-Hungarian wire cutters

Museo Storico Italiano della Guerra

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"White Tunnel" at Passo Paradiso, Passo Tonale

Tourist Office, Vermiglio

Snowshoes

Museo Storico Italiano della Guerra

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Wooden church built by Russian prisoners by Rifugio "Dante Ongari" on Carè Alto

Matteo Motter

Cage built by a Russian prisoner

Pejo 1914-1918. La guerra sulla porta

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Letters and postcards

Museo Storico Italiano della Guerra

Italian cemetery in Malga Sorgazza, in the mountain group of Lagorai

Ecomuseo del Viaggio - Comune di Pieve Tesino

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Trenches on Mount Altissimo di Nago

Museo Storico Italiano della Guerra

